

## **MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY IS A MARKET ENHANCER:**

### **Creating communities in the mobile cyberspace**

**Vibeke Wara**

**[www.mulimob.org](http://www.mulimob.org)**

**[vibeke@mulimob.org](mailto:vibeke@mulimob.org)**

*Funded by the European Commission as part of the IST programme, MuLiMob SSA aims to make the most of Europe's multilingual and multicultural diversity through information available on current and potential developments and by identifying future research to be done. The music industry is MuLiMobs territory of action.*

*MuLiMob's main objectives are to enhance the wireless community's awareness of multilingual and multicultural mobile services and applications, to stimulate a rapid take up of innovative ideas within the whole mobile value chain and to identify issues and problems that need further research, applications or solutions.*

At a time when music purchasing is turning mobile, the music industry needs to reconsider music in a way other than as merely a product. Music is increasingly proving its role as the sole aesthetic expression present in everyone's life. It is used as a media to create meaning and relationships within social structures.

In Europe, sounds and styles are blending, trans-culturally and are ethnically intersecting to create a still larger amount of content variety. The target is increasingly crystallizing, creating a problem for marketers who are having difficulties with the amount of content. Furthermore, the market is so specific and under constant mutation making it extremely difficult to profile.

Music marketing must be reconsidered in the era of digitalism. People's relation to music has become a social act where they construct meaning during interaction by choosing music on a higher level and actively place themselves in social systems with a need for social amalgamation.

The crucial question is: how it is possible to facilitate user's multicultural and multi-linguistic challenge while choosing music on a mobile phone? Furthermore, how can a richer user experience be created during interaction?

This concern is first of all *ergonomic*. Content needs to be indexed taxonomically in order to facilitate information retrieval and the user's possibility to choose music.

One idea might be to focus the user's retrieval process, making content visible while enhancing the user's experience. Therefore, it is important to develop a service of *interactivity*. The Music should not, per se, be considered as a product. *Through the*

*services offered – in the interactive relationship between the user and his mobile device – music becomes a product if developed as a way to assess music.*

Therefore, it recognises the fact that the user has an emotional relationship with music that cannot be based on the user's purely functional motivations. Services have to be coherent with the act of listening to music. In other words, the interactive process needs to evolve in order to encourage information retrieval. We already know that the idea of communities is of great importance at all different levels: on the Internet (blogs), joining associations, actions etc. Community creation is a way for people to develop meaning. Various companies have been exploiting this knowledge for years by creating micro worlds for their customers. We also know about the significance of music in people's life. Therefore, we need to study:

1. The experience of mobile music
2. The experience of mobile communities. In other words, searching for music should be more an act of joining communities and less an act of browsing pages with excessive content.

### **1. The role of music: Values and self-identification.**

In the era of 3G technology, something remarkable has happened. During the last couple of years, mobile phones have unified the two functions: The mobile phone has become both a functional instrument making everyday life easier for individuals and as a device for socialization.

#### **1.1 B to C as Community: Replacing the hat with the phone.**

A result of the latter, we now have ring tones, ring back tones, wallpaper and exclusive design with still more to come. Nokia was the first to launch the "connecting people" marketing campaign where the phone became a magic tool identifying its owner through colour and design. Today, music is used the same way. The buyers of mobile phones are the same as those purchasing music (15-25 age group worldwide). Music has always been a tool to create alliances, - mirroring communities where people satisfy their need of belonging to something. In the last decades, music has evolved into various branches: thousands of sounds, styles and rhythms reflect values and life styles. Not surprisingly, ring tones - the baby of the mobile phone and aural community creation - have become successful.

In the next couple of years, new models will be on the market and most manufacturers will focus on models adapted to the specific needs of the customer. Not many models will be all-in-one, must-have tools. A person spending four hours on public transportation will not have the same needs as someone driving to work. While the screen will not be indispensable, sound will be present in all devices: The screen acts as an entity that shapes an intimate relationship between the handset and its owner, the sound is like vocal communication, about sharing - sharing experiences and signalling identity to its surroundings.

A music distributor that understands that the customer is not a passive, but an active listener who uses music to join communities will have a greater chance of success in the market. *Content providers must create a virtual space for customers while branding the content.*

To understand this we need to scroll back and visualise the act of listening to music in a mobile context. People need music to join communities. Unfortunately, if you're in the mobile 3G-era, this is a limited matter - at least if you're not a Britney Spears or Robbie Williams fan. So far, mobile music, limits content because too much of it makes retrieval difficult.

What does this mean from a customer's point of view? When people purchase CDs, they are pushed to buy them because:

1. Ads in the Media promote the artist
2. Individuals share their experiences. For financial reasons, few people buy several CDs per week raising CDs to a cult status or identity-creating objects. A person who makes the effort of walking into a store and buying 12 tracks by the same artist is at some point identifying him with values or expressions of the sound.

Thirty years ago, Pierre Bourdieu taught us that looking at a person's CD collection tells a lot about that person's lifestyle and values. This way of buying music can be said to be a radical choice of direction in tastes and values. Buying music is affected by how a person identifies himself. His choices are centred on a limited selection of artists, who come to have a significant status in the person's life. When someone looks at their CD (or record) collection, every object represents a period, a state of being and a temporary conviction. Changing musical taste or evolving it is somehow linked to how a person grows within his/her surroundings by personal, cultural, trans-cultural, political and sociological evolutions.

When MP3s invaded people's lives and they all became pirates (or thieves stealing from dying children as John Kennedy<sup>1</sup> put it at the Midem), something happened to the identification process in choosing music. On the Internet, places like Napster proposed a huge variety of easy-to-find, one-track pieces. Suddenly, listening to music was no longer a radical act of choosing who you are, but an act of discovering. Free CDs burned by friends, free downloads (legal or not), owning music and doubling or trebling one's collection became a source of discovery of other worlds, other attitudes. Music became more accessible for everyone. It was transformed from an act of luxury to an act of the people (rich or poor) communicating to each other by sharing music.

Cyber worlds grew and people met through music and more communities were created. What difference is there between belonging to something by buying a CD and belonging to something by joining a cyber community? The Internet is said to have given voice to the public. The act of downloading music can certainly be said to be an inter-relationship - a subject or media-mutual act - less governed by publicity campaigns and MTV. When we walk into a music store we already know what we are going to buy (or at least have an idea). We're helped along by MTV and Top 50 radio. On the other hand, we never know what we're going to listen to when we surf the web. We're driven, seduced and tempted during the interactive process.

The content providers who are able to attract people are the ones who recognize the music's role as community-creating. The difference between downloading and purchasing a CD is that by going to the store, one is dominated by a one-way commercial voice. Downloading music on the other hand, is an interactive action where the object is constructive. It's an act where individuals are brought together by the need of belonging to something, a community at all levels.

With digital music, the act of listening to music has become a means of bringing people together and sharing experiences and not a means of ownership. Do we want to own 7000 tracks and carry them around in our phones? Consider the situation: "Hey, how many tracks do you own? Let me listen. Oh, what a shame, I'd better not, this would make me a DRM violator". Imagine what happens if you lose your phone with 7000 tracks at 2 euros per track!

Allowing people to share music is an important issue that shouldn't be neglected but you don't borrow a phone to listen to music the way you borrow a CD. Fortunately, mobile music distributors have started exploring the alternatives of distributing

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<sup>1</sup> CEO of IFPI

music to make the consumer feel free to explore and share their aural experiences. "Super distribution" is legal music sharing: DRM-protected content downloaded to one device may also be further distributed to other devices. The DRM content is encrypted and may only be used when the device/user has acquired the associated rights. If the implementation of Digital Right Management is necessary to protect the rights of authors and labels, the idea of content as being something people share is important to consider. The subscription model, people paying a monthly fee to download unlimited content, is an even more prominent model that distributors have started implementing.

Mobile phones indeed have the potential of bringing people together. In fact, this is what mobile phones are all about if you listen to manufacturers and operators. Mobile phones are not portable gold mines, with content that we can't share with anyone. The music industry is suffering so we might envisage a collective brainwashing and change people so that they get so frightened that they will buy thousands of tracks (and not share them with anyone). – Or we can adapt to collective behaviour that is about joining communities through the music as a strategic tool to turn music into a product.

### **1.2 Branding: Interaction for construction.**

For the time being, manufacturers, aggregators and operators are endeavouring to win the market of music buyers by intense branding strategies often using music as part of the branding. Whether it's about selling music or using music downloads to enforce the brand, the value of music as community-creating is rather underestimated. Marketers tend to consider MUSIC and the act of listening to music as a branding feature. However, it is actually the branches of music that people can identify with and not the global act of listening. The idea of a community must therefore be understood as a local entity rather than as a global one. It's a social place rather than a space - a place that people actively join by choosing music. A community is a social system. It can be defined as connecting individuals with the same culture, motivations and forming a social identity. In subgroups of people living in major cities corresponding stigmata can be identified as indicating common behaviour (such as having a preference for the same type of clothing, listening to the same music and expressing the same opinions and ideology). To some extent, these matters become an extreme of what Pierre Bourdieu described as a way to distinguish oneself. Members of a community, however, are aware of their lifestyle

and form opinions according to the community they belong to. While the corporate world is developing, economic marketing strategies are evolving through artificial tribes and uniting various brands like Agnes B, Colette and Smart.

In developing brands, music has so far played a secondary role. To some extent the visual form of expression has prevailed, in particular in relation to commercial advertising, where musical expression has been used as an ideological role model for the brand. Therefore, the creation of a brand is not only confined to the realisation of a concept, design and marketing strategy, but it is a task that creates galaxies of values, affiliations and connecting relationships, which the potential buyer will enjoy being part of.

Music can therefore be perceived as a profitable expression, having a dual, alternating potential. It may use commercial enterprises to maintain and popularise expression, while at the same time adding to the rigid rhetoric of advertising a new dimension. Reaching beyond the purpose of attracting the user, and heading towards a social system, users can choose to join and belong to something by the use of interaction.

First, it is necessary to keep a distance from the interface as a tool and to focus on it as a phenomenon. Can we identify factors related to interface that promote subject creation? The visual space of mass media outside the interface is formed by a trans-subjective space, where a person's need to form an opinion motivates him to act. On the contrary, mobile interfaces are strictly functional. Because of small screens and small interfaces, people don't find any pleasure in browsing the Internet or Wap services like they do when they surf the web on a PC. However, this transparency ideal in design of interface favours a functional human / machine relationship.

Interpretation is disregarded while the physical interaction is mechanised. This matter is reported to be a consequence of cognitive theories, describing the brain as a database. The bigger the input the more the brain will develop. Subsequently, the brain starts to process the accumulated inputs. The transparency paradigm has been a necessary step in the often-complicated relationship between humans and machines. In many situations, the transparent relationship will remain a prerequisite in order to get interaction to work. However, if the goal is to create enhancing mobile interfaces, the constructivism paradigm proposes the subject creating form of interaction as an alternative to the transparency paradigm, because the physical act is motivated by a cognitive process. Consequently, the relationship between human and mobile interface can change crucially. If interaction is considered not only to just

generate physical and mechanical relationships triggered by denotative inputs, but also as a process in which the subject is enabled to form opinions during interaction in a social system - this facet must be evaluated - then interaction may conceivably turn out to be subject-creating.

In practise, making interaction subject-creating becomes thus a process of branding the different musical styles as galaxies of values rather than branding the operator, the distributor or the aggregator as a whole. A user doesn't care about joining a Nokia, Vodafone or a SFR community. He wants to be connected to his musical cyber community, where he can get the information he wants about new releases, events and maybe discover interlinked styles while surfing and meeting people with same tastes and values<sup>2</sup>.

### **1.3 Turning music into a product by joining Communities**

So far, selling mobile music has been linked to operator services, which tend to lock users within Wap systems. In the future, mobile navigating will extend Wap services for more accessible I-mode navigation. Consequently, we could imagine a label managing its own mobile distribution parallel to MP3 downloads on the Internet.

This is already happening in Japan (Seven Seas). It is why mobile music distributors have to find a reason why people would want to buy tracks at 3 euros on mobile phones when they can get the same tracks for free (or for less) elsewhere.

If the digital world has become a space where people create places with music as one of the lead expressions, mobile music is still left behind because of the limited content. So far, content providers go for the safe solution and target Top 50 listeners. How can the act of listening to music become self constructive if everyone in all age groups and all nationalities are limited to listening to Britney Spears and Madonna? Small-volume downloads are a problem because a minimum is required for it to be profitable. But the ergonomic concern is even more difficult to manage. It seems as if mobile music brings back the barriers that impeded music publishers from publishing CDs out of fear of failure. Europe's cultural diversity is a problem because of the many targets. But the people making these targets are exactly the same as the ones who are joining blogs and visiting websites for free downloads. The Indies hold content that, because it is a niche market, is perfectly community-creating. If Top 50 is considered as mainstream, the Indies very often propose content that creates its own sound and identity. Indies are carriers of cultural

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<sup>2</sup> As an example see [www.crammedblog.org](http://www.crammedblog.org)

diversity. It is true that it is trendy to listen to music from independent labels, just as it is not trendy to eat at McDonalds and trendy to eat sushi. People today want to be the first to discover something. They want the leader status in a context where the music is THE expression that signalises to their surroundings that they are in the right vogue.

The variety of content needs to be visible to the public. This is especially a problem for the Indies because they don't have the financial opportunity to become visible, and on the other hand, who else is going to pay for this crucial visibility? Looking at music as a product to be sold seems so embedded that all actors in the mobile music industry have ended in a profit lacuna. As long as music is seen as a product, it will be marketed when profit-making potential is certain. But if we examine this issue from a different perspective and make it obvious that in order for music to become a product, logic has to change: Music will no longer be a profitable product per se, but a tool that might become a product if well managed in the relationship between subject, media and society. *Physical distribution is controlled by profit, but digital is about controlling the user experience – the interactive fusion.*

This is why aggregators have understood that profiling technologies are extremely important in services. As the ergonomic problem seems to be the biggest barrier for the moment, content needs to be personalised in order for it to be limited to each user's needs. People are unable to spend time browsing badly-indexed contents. When interaction is personalised, the content proposed will be limited and linked to the experience of the user and thus to the community. Customer-relations management allows tracking the customer in order to become familiar with what he likes, how he downloads and buys and at which frequency (all this within the limits of the law) in order to adapt services to his needs and wishes. This helps qualifying and profiling clients and markets. It is important because navigating will be more an act of joining a community and less of browsing pages with limited and irrelevant content.



## **2. Recreating the mobile cyberspace.**

The opportunity for the mobile music business today is the multicultural European target waiting to gain access to vast amounts of trans-cultural and multicultural content (independent labels). We already know that users need to join communities - to use music as a tool in order to actively construct a meaning of dependency in a social structure of taste and values. How do we use this to improve services, to enforce the user experience so that the user enjoys using his mobile device to discover sounds and to interact in a space where he is given these opportunities?

### **2.1 www, networks and communities.**

First of all, we have to consider how community-creation exists in the different Medias. The idea of a community with mobile phones is a social network – the subject linked to other subjects in the address book. In other words, the subject can walk around with his personal web of connections, always accessible and always reachable.

Contrary to mobile phones, the web has been considered as a virtual space existing parallel to the physical social space and isolating individuals from direct social relations, inventing a so-called cyberspace, with its own rules, norms and communicative codes. Whereas social “cyber relations” are mediated in forms that are immediate (MUDs, chats) or gradual (blogs, email, forums), the linguistic mode of expression is adapted to the form of the media, inventing new significances and creating social spaces that can be defined by sets of rules that are embedded in the form of the media and its limitations. Individuals communicating on the internet cannot be defined as culturally embedded actors, as their communication most often crosses borders and adapts to a clear, denotative mode of expression often filtered in one language (English). Cyber sociability thus creates a mode of communication, which is per se detached from the cultural context.

Mobile phones and SMS text messages have contributed to a new form of communication. Teens have become specialists in expressing themselves in extremely compressed ways and have created a new language linked to its social context and the possibilities that are given by the media<sup>3</sup>. It emphasizes the personal mobile web of connections and is to some extent self-enhancing, as individuals tend

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<sup>3</sup> Sadie Plant speaks about “localized hybrid languages”

to re-use expressions, coming from other individuals. Mobile social life is conceived through networks of individuals connected by re-mediated expressions.

Immediate communication on the web and communication using mobile phones are, in both cases, grounded in the media and its subsequent limitations. The difference between the two forms is to be found in the cultural context: Immediate communication on the web creates its own social space. It is not linked to the physical, social or cultural context, because actors are physically situated in different cultural and social situations, whereas networks of mobile connections are mostly localised.

## **2.2 Online communities: Branding and cultural interfaces**

When users surfing on the Internet move into this galaxy, driven or generated by a need to search for a social system, it may reflect a need for subject creation.

Definitions in theoretical terms are required to design subject creating systems on the Internet. The interface is the core of the social network while the interactivity is a measure to identify a social network.

The space we experience when surfing the net is often considered a social sphere parallel to the physical social sphere. Surfing however, is powered by interest where subject formation is a prerequisite. From this point of view, the Internet can be perceived as a gateway to a social environment where we form opinions, while the interface constitutes a means of encouraging one to operate in a virtual and physical social sphere at the same time.

A fairly well-known mode is hypertext, visiting different html pages linked together, whether it's for retrieving information or to obtain a goal (by purchasing music, for example). The user in this situation can be said to be linguistically inactive. It does not mean that the communication is uni-directional (from the screen to the user).

The user expresses himself interactively by the choice of links and by creating cognitive models of his path in order to obtain his goals efficiently. The Internet's web of connections is divergent to the so-called cyberspace – with its own expressions and internal rules: Internet pages utilise linguistic expressions and visual signs with roots in the specific cultural context, re-mediating forms from other Medias, a phenomenon Lev Manovich termed Cultural Interfaces<sup>4</sup>. This tendency can more specifically be observed through on-line publicity campaigns, adapting the mode of expression to the different social and cultural receiver (Nike, Adidas and

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<sup>4</sup> Manovich, 1996

Diesel). These collections of html pages are most often linked by partnerships with other collections of html pages. The web of linked html pages can thus be considered a cultural mode of communication, where user interaction is decisive for the content. After years of intensive publicity campaigns in all kind of medias, the targets have become increasingly more difficult to manipulate. Seducing with pictures and sound has become a psychological and socio-semiotic study. This process is saturated with symbols that mostly touch the subconscious. The battle between the consumer judging and the marketer seducing is becoming more and more intense and all tools are applied – even the music as free downloads (Coca Cola, Mc Donald, Mercedes, The Guardian). This way of giving away music for free can be said to turn the artist into a buffoon, but it can also become a way to use branding for promotion. Building brands today is a cooperative job. Artists and content providers need each other to build communities.

To attract the customer, interactive features have become a must when applying branding strategies. Nokia and Nike, as the most successful interactive brands, have been creating micro-worlds that swallow people up when they visit their websites. What Nokia and Nike have been doing in reality is creating communities – inspired from the real world, life styles and values that surround them.

The interface on the Internet emerges as a gateway to a system. The user acts in the physical as well as the virtual space, partly by using associated and related websites, partly by accepting what the brand is offering, forming opinions from what is experienced on the Internet. In accordance with a planned strategy, Colette organises parties with techno music where artists have the opportunity to perform or show their creations<sup>1</sup>. By doing so, Colette has created a valuable and connecting relationship between buyers, supporters and artists, providing an identity based on creativity, music and social affiliation. At the same time, artists benefit from the prosperity of Colette, and are able to display their creations.

Branding strategies should not only serve as examples in the creation of communities. A prominent example of an online community founded in music is the website [www.releasethereality.com](http://www.releasethereality.com). The website is linked to the «web radio» [www.highlifeinn.com](http://www.highlifeinn.com) and the music to download is free under a creative commons license ([www.creativecommons.org](http://www.creativecommons.org)). What is interesting in communities like Releasethereality is the homogeneousness of values, which are underlined by the music. The music, being representative of a small branch of electronic music called Break Beat, is the base of the values and points of interest that this website

represents. Because the website is maintained by one person who is part of the community, all content ultimately creates the identity of the community in accordance with the consistency of values of other members. Comparing the socio-semiotic results from studies of these websites and social studies of member's behaviour, values and identity, shows that the website can be considered as being the Media's response to the communities nucleus of values and opinions and affects members in their relationship with music and social events, thus creating a galaxy of interlinked online communities.

### **2.3 Mobile community creation**

So far, we can categorize three major modes of communication: First, the immediate cyber communication on the web between subjects, *isolated from the cultural context*. Second, the immediate SMS messaging and phone calls between subjects, *linked to the local cultural context*, and third, the cultural interface, *adapted to the cultural context* utilising the media as being interactive to integrate the user in the evaluation of content.

So how can we describe the future mode of communication, likely to be the cultural interface in mobile phones? Until now, the mode of expression has been limited to technical restrictions of media. In order to understand usability, the mobile-user experience and his needs, we need to consider the unprocessed mode of communication from a media aesthetic point of view: So far, mobile phones have created communities that are localised, thereby re-inventing linguistic expressions that can be considered internal codes among different local groups of individuals. The web creates communities that are cultural, thereby re-inventing linguistic and visual expressions that need to reach larger cultural groups. In these two modalities the expression is linked to its geographical physical environment on two different scales: the social, being small groups of individuals and the cultural, being large groups of individuals. In the end, the Internet in mobile phones can be considered to have great potential in integrating both social and cultural communities.

Re-mediating the creation of rich interactive experiences and community creation from the web on the mobile media is vital. It has taken the Internet twenty years to reach this stage, and mobile phones are perfectly adaptable to www browsing. However, the limited screen size is a problem. The mobile screen is not compatible with the pixel size of the content on the web. Adapting services in mobile phones is a major concern because the media is new and hasn't found its own expression and

mode of interaction. This process of remediation takes time. A lot of usability studies have to be done. Moreover, a semiologic approach exploring how signs can be optimised on small screens could be profitable.

When, and in what context, does a mobile interactive experience need to be functional or aesthetic? In what cases is it possible for features to be incorporated in order to optimise user experience and seduce him throughout the interactive process?

#### **2.4 Localizing content through community creation: online communities and moblogs.**

Creating an interactive context where users navigate with pleasure implies other issues than the one of creating communities. Europe is a niche market with many customers who speak different languages and have different values. Lifestyles services need to be adapted to these groups. It is in the services offered that the link between the user and the content appears. This means that services not only need to represent content (the different music), but that it should also allow the user recognise the interactive context in a way that appeals to him, thereby enhancing the desire to stay within the mobile cyber community. It is through this process that content can become a product.

This can be done through interactive features like games and moblogs in order to attract the user and optimise the user experience. The success of blogging gives an idea of how people need to create values and construct meaning. The opportunities for moblogs are even greater because there's a possibility to integrate this feature in mobile music services to create communities. Mob logging holds a potential of letting the user be creative within a space predefined by the content provider. From a marketing standpoint, creating communities is about incorporating the user to make him feel that his opinion is important and allowing him take part in product branding by creating it actively.

What is important to notice about Realeasethereality is that this community is not separated from social and cultural context. The content is localised in order for members to meet and go to concerts or conferences. This is in opposition to other online community modes like MUDs, where the community is built in a cyber reality – detached from the social and cultural context. Mobile communities can re-mediate localised communities like the Releasethereality example.

How is it possible to adapt services to all of these multi-cultural and multi linguistic targets? At this point, a lot of the services adapt to the local language. If services need to be truly enhancing we have to keep in mind that in order to create a community, the objects creating it have to express values that the user recognises in his everyday life. This means that if the mobile community builds its context from global expressions, we will end up with the cyber community we already know from the web – detached from specific localisation. The nucleus of mobile communities is about small groups of individuals linked together – tribes re-creating social structures as is the case with SMS text communication. It is indispensable to re-mediate this user need while building services. Languages, signs and sounds don't play a purely functional role for users. As an example, Vodafone in Spain has chosen to offer Catalan services to their users even though all Catalans speak Spanish. The motivation for this is emotional: People use their device as a tool in the self-identification interactive process. So just as the phone – connecting people – offers people the possibility of expressing their lifestyle with ring tones, design and colour, and just as music is a way to create communities, services have to follow up on this and build communities.

Earlier reports have shown that people in different countries react differently to colour and signs. Good branding strategies take into account that users are not all the same. Nokia.com might be the best interactive example of this: The information is the same, but the tools (the signs, the words) differ from country to country. What is needed is not exclusively adapting services to each country but also to build communities adapted to content. The challenge will be to let people take part in creating the mobile cyberspace and mob logging is an excellent tool to do this. This is possible with geolocalised moblogs. Imagine that your default bookmark is your music moblog, where you get information everyday about local concerts, happenings and releases from your provider and where you are able to connect to your branched services without having to browse loads of irrelevant content to find what you're looking for<sup>5</sup>. If the specific moblog is adapted to the local language and culture, services can surely be considered as localised.

## **2.6 Constructing meaning using sound, relative to mobile media**

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<sup>5</sup> For more information about moblogs go to [www.movingblogs.com](http://www.movingblogs.com)

As mentioned earlier, the question is not only about content but also how to place value on the content. Services have to be easy to use to create rich user experiences and develop content value in the interaction process before the content can be considered as a product. *The change has to happen in the services offered. If these services don't satisfy the user and play host to him in a mobile cyberspace that he wants to return to, the value of the content will be overlooked.*

Interaction on the Internet has so far been carried by visual expression. Sound has been used as a secondary expression dressing the interactive object – the link, or as a secondary expression used to create an ambiance. If the image has been the lead expression on the Internet, the importance of sound in mobile services is growing. The mobile screen will never be as large as a television or PC. This means that it is extremely important to find new ways of integrating sound in the interaction process in order to build expressions that involve the user and encourage him to stay in the mobile interactive process. If these services don't respond to this, the user will employ the services in goal-oriented matters, and the interactive relationship between the user and the mobile device will not be optimised. Sound must become a carrier of mobile expression just as the image has done with the screen in other media. The importance of sound in mobile media is already being explored in mobile games where visual expression is limited and where sound needs to compensate for this limitation.

The importance of sound in games and movies needs to be further explored in the different aesthetic functions. The remaining question will be how to adapt these functions to mobile media and the interactive process. Incorporating sound interactively is difficult because this is a new interaction feature. But a lot of examples exist mainly within the game industry, where sound and music have a chance to win an otherwise lost market. An example of an interactive feature where sound is incorporated in the interactive process is the interactive flash movie boohbah ([www.boohbah.com/zone.html](http://www.boohbah.com/zone.html)). This example is given to illustrate how a relatively simple graphical layer is enforced by sound that becomes the carrier in the interactive flow.

Projects like Visual Radio (Hewlett Packard and Nokia) illustrate the ambition of re-mediating the screen into the mobile device. The user is able to listen to a sound by streaming and also to see the video clip. Additional information is given about the artist. This feature is great entertainment and it encourages the user to get a feeling for participation, because he's able to send SMS texts and express his opinions. But

the interactive feature in this is limited to the choice of listening, downloading music and retrieving information. Cognitively, the user remains passive and the act of listening to music remains a one-way process – from the screen to the user.

## **2.7 Re-mediating the experience of P2P in services as a marketing tool.**

Mobile media has, however, proven its place as a tool to link people together interactively. Sound processing in mobile phones has to follow up on the desire of individuals to create communities. The main issue here is how to involve the user interactively. To do this, it is necessary to re-mediate the prominence of mobile media, which gives people the opportunity to express themselves interactively and create social structures. Sending an SMS text is an interactive expression, and it has become a prominent tool of the mobile media. How can this expression mode be reused with music? This can be done in various ways. For example, by using super distribution models and letting users send their favourite tracks to friends like they send SMS texts today. Simply sending music is a way of linking people together, letting them communicate values to each other and sharing experiences. But for the music to truly become an enhancing interactive experience giving people the opportunity to express themselves and use their own everyday expressions to co-create communities, creativity is a necessary facet. An attempt has been made by Nokia's expressive messages ([www.nokia.com/exms](http://www.nokia.com/exms)). This is a way to give users a tool to compose sequences of moving images with their own text. Sound could very well be used as an enhancing expression and sending SMS texts while adding moody sounds can be a way for users to enforce expressions and fill in the space where linguistic expressions are not complete.

The P2P debate is, at present, restricted to being a question of DRM and music download. However, P2P has proved its success not in terms of stealing music, but in terms of giving the user the opportunity to express himself through creativity. This is a way to incorporate the user in the interaction process that shouldn't be neglected in services. Marketers can use the P2P concept in the seduction process – the process needed to turn the music into a product by giving users the opportunity to compose their own samples and send them to friends, sampling sounds and using them for ring tones etc. The opportunities are enormous and the needs of the user clearly exist. Why not let users create their own aural messages? A similar initiative



has been done by Creative Commons<sup>6</sup>, which allows users to upload their work, share it and let other people modify the work. This is an optimal way of using music as a tool to allow people to share experiences through creativity and to actively construct a community.

The potential of P2P is being studied by Nokia

(<http://www.nokia.com/nokia/0,,5169,00.html>). We are not at the P2P stage yet, but the importance of viewing the user as someone who actively participates in relation to the media and the mobile community is crucial. P2P is not about getting music for free but about revising the role of the media – something that is rooted in the user's needs and that should shape the services offered. As Cuvillier said at the Midem, technology should follow user need and not the opposite. P2P is about giving the user the opportunity to construct meaning during interaction and free him from his role as passive end user. Constructing meaning is about creating communities and it is the music publisher's role to give the user the tools to do so. By doing so, the content becomes both a tool and a product, but this is a necessary step to include.

Mob logs and re-mediating the success of P2P is one of many ways to this. It's a way of reaching people directly and offering them a tool to shape the media and the community, where netters already lead in the personalisation process. A surprising research project re-mediating the P2P experience and understanding the importance of music communities in people's everyday life is the AWAIRE project<sup>7</sup>. The Awaire music service and the Aura were created as tools to link people together, through aural experiences. The Awaire service is a peer-to-peer music network. It is the backend that collects real-time data such as the current song, location, and music library from each Aura. The Awaire device is called the Aura. The Aura is a portable networked mp3 player, with built-in GPS. It has vast amounts of storage space and relies on a high-speed network and precise location tracking. Awaire has added a way to bookmark other users for quick access to their music library.

Concretely, the AWAIRE service connects people with a need for social amalgamation as the primary motivating factor through the act of listening to music – being personal means joining communities. The idea is great. We'll only have to wait a couple of years to see AWAIRE come of age because it relies on a high-speed network and precise location tracking.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://creativecommons.org>

<sup>7</sup> [www.awaire.net](http://www.awaire.net)

**Conclusion.**

In the next couple of years, mobile music distribution will branch out into many different directions, using different kinds of marketing strategies and business models. There's no doubt that the European niche market is not going to be left out. Purchasing music is simply a different act than downloading a ring tone to personalise a phone. Whereas ring tones have reached the 15-25 age-bracket and Top 50 market, full-length tracks purchasing is becoming an impulsive mobile act and there's an opportunity to reach markets that previously did not purchase music. We therefore have to consider the discussed issues and features in light of the fact that aural experiences are an act of joining communities, creating social structures and creating meaning. This must be done without neglecting that the mobile cyber-community is linked to its physical environment and brings people together, allowing them to share experiences.